DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 235 939 RC 014 363

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TITLE Case Study on Skovde Municipality and Its Ethnic Minorities (Sweden). The CDCC's Project No. 7.: "The Education and Cultural Development of Migrants".
INSTITUTION Council for Cultural Cooperation, Strasbourg (France).
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 17p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Basic Education; *Bilingual Education; Case Studies; Educational Finance; Elementary Secondary Education; *Ethnic Groups; Foreign Countries; *Immigrants; *Migrant Education; *Native Language Instruction; Preschool Education; School Community Relationship; Second Language Learning
IDENTIFIERS Finland; *Sweden (Skovde); Syria; Yugoslavia

ABSTRACT

A 1970's educational program in Skovde, Sweden, supports the country's immigrant policy of equality, freedom of choice, and cooperation by providing for active bilingualism among immigrant children at school. The program provides instruction from certified bilingual teachers in 16 home languages for immigrant groups dominated by Finns but also including Yugoslavs, Turks, Syrians, Assyrians, Danes, and Norwegians. While some groups refuse home-language instruction, most take advantage of it. Part of the normal school program, the immigrant activities include education at three levels. Preschool education, for ages 5-6, is entirely in the home language for the larger immigrant groups. During the first six years of compulsory school (ages 7-16), large immigrant groups can have completely separate instruction with Swedish taught as a foreign language. During the last three years, instruction is in Swedish and special help is available. During upper secondary school, lasting 2-4 years, foreign students get two hours of home-language instruction weekly. Outside the schools, adult basic education for immigrants is available within the workplace. Transfer of the Skovde program to other locations would depend on sufficient financial support, a large migrant group, school administration autonomy, and recognition of immigrants' integral place in society. (SB)

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The CDCC's Project No. 7 :

"The education and cultural development of migrants"

CASE STUDY
SKÖVDE MUNICIPALITY
AND ITS ETHNIC MINORITIES

(Sweden)

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RC014363

COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION
School Education Division

STRASBOURG
1983

Strasbourg, 15 February 1983 DECS/EGT (83) 4

The CDCC's Project No. 7:
"The Education and Cultural Development of Migrants"

Case-study

"SKÖVDE MUNICIPALITY AND ITS ETHNIC MINORITIES"

(SWEDEN)

by

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Acknowledgements

I warmly thank Mr A Sandahl, Mrs M Ersmarker and especially Mr S Hultman who organised my study visit as well as the members of the Community Council, the School Board, the Consultative Group for Immigrant Education and the school directors, teachers and students for their warm welcome and for the information they gave me.

Further thanks are due to Mrs E Loth and Mrs C Joris who read and commented upon the first draft of this case-study.

1. LOCAL CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

Skövde municipality is situated in the country (län) of Skaraborg, approximately 150 km to the north-east of Göteborg.

The municipality lies in an agricultural area for which it is an important trading centre. Moreover it has three major industries. Of these the largest is Volvo Skövdeverken where cars, truck engines and components are built and where about 4,000 people are employed. The other two industries are an insulation-material firm and cement works. Skövde has a large hospital that again employs about 4,000 persons. Further the town houses one of Sweden's largest garrisons with three regiments and the military command staff for Western Sweden. On the educational side most forms of education from nursery school to university are provided for. Finally, Skövde is not unimportant as a recreational centre.

Skövde has a population of 46,007 inhabitants. Of these, there are about 4,300 immigrants (9.3%) representing 30 nationalities. Of these immigrants 3,046 (6.7%) have retained their own citizenship (situation on 1 January 1981) (1).

Labour immigration began after World War II but became important in the 1960s and in the early 1970s. As a consequence of a Nordic co-operation agreement in 1954, most immigrants were of Finnish origin. The immigration of Finns was very high in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Non-Nordic workers were recruited as well, especially from Yugoslavia. Since 1967 however, all foreigners from outside the Nordic countries wanting to immigrate to Sweden need a residence and work permit before entering the country. In the late 1970s immigration from outside Europe, especially by refugees from Turkey, Iraq and Lebanon became important in Skövde.

For a general view of the most important migrant groups in Skövde see table 1.

Table 1: Immigrants in Skövde with a foreign citizenship on 1 January 1982 (2).

Finland	1640
Yugoslavia	326
Turkey	216
Denmark	121
Norway	112
Iraq	71
Lebanon	57
Western Germany	55

(groups with less than 50 members are not included).

The Finnish contingent is thus the largest with 2,500 members, of which 1,640 have retained their own citizenship. The majority are labour migrants. Immigration from Finland has ceased now and a number of Finns have even returned. Finns are considered to be well integrated in Swedish society without having lost their ethnic particularities and consciousness. They are very active in a local Finnish society which offers a wide range of

activities and acts as a reference and pressure group in matters of importance to the Finnish contingent, thus also in matters of migrant education. The Finnish contingent is spread throughout the municipality but most Finns live in tenant houses in the three districts of Ryd, Lunden and Ostermalm. The native language of the Finns is of course Finnish. Belonging to the Finno-Ugrian language family it is however not at all related to Swedish which belongs to the Scandinavian branch of the Germanic languages that in turn belong to the Indo-European language family (3).

The Syrian/Assyrian contingent has 500 members. Of these 390 have non-Swedish citizenship. The group seems to have originally migrated from the same area in Turkey from where many fled to Lebanon for religious and political reasons before coming to Sweden. They formed a Christian minority in an Islamic environment. Linguistically the situation is a complex one and in some families several languages like Turkish and Arabic are actively spoken, not to mention their liturgical Syriac. Most of them usually were illiterate and thus could not use the scripts of these languages, often because they only spoke the non-written vernaculars. Almost the entire Syrian/Assyrian contingent lives in the new district of Södra Ryd.

The Yugoslav contingent has 350 members of whom 326 have foreign citizenship. Their native language is Serbo-Croatian which can be written in the Latin and in the Cyrillic script. Most Yugoslavs live in the district of Ostermalm.

During the school year 1981-1982 more than 6,000 pupils attended compulsory school (1). About 10% of these were of foreign origin. About 1,700 pupils attended upper secondary school.

The number of immigrant children in the different schools fluctuates. The compulsory school of Ryd for instance has nearly 25% of immigrant children for whom sixteen different native language courses are organised. For organisational reasons pupils of one language group are sometimes concentrated in one school.

The object of this case study is not one homogeneous or limited project but the rather complex situation of all activities that concern immigrant education on all the different levels from pre-school over compulsory school and upper secondary school to adult education in its different forms and that are organised in one town, namely Skövde. The organisational and institutional features of these different activities are further complicated because they do not depend on one sole institution. All activities however are possible only thanks to the general policy of the Swedish Government on migration and minorities and thanks to its very important financial support.

2. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE PROJECT

As mentioned before, immigrant education in Skövde cannot be isolated from the national Swedish policy on migration and minorities, especially its policy concerning immigrant education. We therefore start with an outline of this policy. For further details see Boye-Möller (4).

Since the great wave of immigration in the 1960s a public debate arose and a number of measures were taken to improve the immigrants' situation. These measures included the provision of interpreters, special Swedish language instruction as well as instruction in and through one's own language. In 1975 Parliament adopted a new immigrant policy that can be summarised by the words equality, freedom of choice and co-operation.

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Equality implies that immigrant and minority groups should have the same opportunities, rights and obligations as the population at large. They should have equal chance to retain and develop their native languages and pursue their own cultural activities and interests.

Freedom of choice means that these groups must be able to decide the extent to which they are to retain and develop their original cultural and linguistic identity, whether they want to stay in Sweden or not. To achieve this objective, official support for the organisation of cultural activities and the instruction of minority languages as well as special Swedish instruction is necessary.

Co-operation means the achievement of mutual and far-reaching concerted action between the different groups that compose the society.

The consequences of this policy are: the right to vote and to stand for office in local and regional elections and, what concerns us more specifically, the promotion of active bilingualism among immigrant students at school. This is achieved by placing the obligation on the local authorities to arrange for home language instruction for every schoolchild whose parents request it. In Sweden the language referred to as home language (hemspråk) is the mother tongue that is used primarily at home in contrast to Swedish that is used in contacts outside the home.

Active bilingualism is further stimulated by other measures. So efforts are made to teach Swedish as a foreign language and special student guidance is organised for immigrant children when instruction happens to be in Swedish. Special instruction in the Swedish language is also provided for outside the normal school situation in the different adult educational programmes that are organised by diverse institutions.

This policy places heavy demands on the educational system, not only in financial terms but also in terms of finding ways to co-operate with immigrant parents, of changing attitudes among Swedish students and teachers and last but not least in terms of local administration.

As a rule the national administration provides for the general guidelines as mentioned above, and for the salary of the teaching staff. For example, in a compulsory school every pupil whose parents ask for home language instruction entitles the school to the subsidy of 1.1 teacher hours a week. Special Swedish instruction accounts for 1.0 teacher hours a week.

The local administration on the other hand provides for the material aspects like school buildings and for the concrete organisation and elaboration of the general guidelines. In so far as concerns the official educational system (and in Skövde all education belongs to this system except for some forms of adult education) this is organised as follows in Skövde.

A consultative group for immigrant education (samrådsgruppen för invandrarundervisnung) received in 1972 the task from the local school board to work out the local scheme. This consultative group is constituted of representatives of the following institutions: the local school board

(this is an executive committee of the community council consisting of eleven members representing the different political parties), the trade unions, the most important immigrant organisations and the managing and teaching staff of the schools.

Inspired by the national guidelines the more practical aims of this group are as follows:

- To teach the immigrant pupil his home language to a level comparable to that of those pupils who stayed in the country of origin. This is important not only in case the pupil should return to his homeland later on, but also for the formation of his own self-awareness (identity) and to preserve and develop his own culture.

- To give basic educational instruction in the first language of the pupil, that is his home language.

- To give the pupil the possibility to become acquainted with important aspects of his own culture.

- To teach Swedish langauge and culture to such a degree that the foreign pupil can integrate into Swedish society and pursue further education in Swedish.

- To organise student guidance for immigrant pupils when instruction cannot completely or cannot any longer be given in the home language.

- To organise special introductory courses for pupils who have just arrived from abroad in order to integrate them in the normal school system.

The consultative group has an essentially advisory capacity and reports to the school board which retains ultimate deciding capacity.

3. RUNNING OF THE PROJECT

In this section the concrete organisation and running of the various activities in Skövde are described. It is important to mention that all these activities are integrated in the normal school programme so that the overburdening of the pupils with all sorts of extra courses after school time is avoided.

a. Pre-school education (förskolan)

Nursery school (deltidsgrupp/lekskola) starts at the age of six and in some cases at five years. Children attend nursery school for three hours a day. For migrant children several possibilities exist, depending on the size and the wishes of the population. Since 1975 Finnish children can follow programmes that are completely run in Finnish. For organisational reasons all the Finnish children of Skövde have to come to the same school. In this nursery school the following aspects are accentuated: exercising and improving the home language and stimulating extrovert behaviour because Finnish children are rather shy and quiet in comparison to their Swedish chool mates. Most of the activities are of a preparatory nature and still ery playful.

Yugoslav and Syrian/Assyrian children also have home language pre-school training. Here a home language teacher is added to the normal staff consisting of one Swedish teacher and a nurse.

Children belonging to smaller language groups are given home language practice for four hours a week.

In day nurseries (daghem), organised for toddlers from six months to school age, and whose parents are out at work, home language practice is also possible.

b. Compulsory school (grundskolan)

Compulsory school in Sweden starts at the age of seven and lasts for nine years. There are three levels of three years each: lågstadiet, mellanstadiet and högstadiet.

In Skövde sixteen different home languages are taught to 525 pupils, 125 pupils of foreign origin abstain from all forms of home language tuition.

Finnish pupils can follow all their courses in Finnish (hemspråksklass) during the first six years of compulsory school. Table 2 gives a survey of their programme and enables it to be compared with that of their Swedish class mates.

Table 2: Programme for Finnish pupils in compulsory school in Skövde (1982-1983)

schoolyear	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
subject									
Finnish	8	9 (a)	7	4	4	4	2	2	2(b)
							4	3	3(c)
Swedish	1(9)	2(11)	4(11)	4(9)	4(7)	4(8)			
Other subject	11	13	19	25	26	27			

a. the figures between brackets are the hours for a normal Swedish class.

b. normal hours for home language in högstadiet.

c. home language as an option in högstadiet.

Finnish pupils also have lessons of Swedish as a foreign language. of which the amount increases while the amount of Finnish lessons decreases.

In the högstadiet tuition is in Swedish, but during important lessons a Finnish teacher who collaborates with the ordinary one, is there to give student guidance. Home language decreases here to two hours a week. In the seventh grade however, all pupils have to take an option.

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Skövde was the first municipality in Sweden that was allowed to let the pupils choose their home language as an option. The idea behind this was: why not let the pupils perfect themselves in their own language instead of starting with a fourth one.

The Yugoslav pupils can also have instruction in their home language in the first six years of compulsory school, but due to the smaller numbers of Yugoslavs they are placed with the Swedish children in composite classes (sammansatt klass). Depending on whether the class has eight or twelve Yugoslavs per 24 pupils the courses are more or less mixed. For instance in the case of eight Yugoslavs in a first year only nine of the twenty hours are given them separately, namely seven hours of Serbo-Croatian and two hours of Swedish as a foreign language, while the other hours are given in Swedish together with the Swedish pupils. When the class has twelve Yugoslavs, only four hours are given up to lessons in composite classes.

The Syrian/Assyrian parents did not wish basic educational instruction for their children to be given through their home language. The reason for this is not very clear. Probably it is due to their linguistic complexity and their migration history: several languages are spoken in one family, different families would opt for a different home language and the vernacular is often a non-written dialect. So all subjects are taught in Swedish, but the pupils receive a considerable amount of student guidance by (Arabic speaking) home language teachers.

For the remaining groups, two hours of home language teaching are given a week. This is due to the low number of pupils in each group so that the resources are restricted.

Immigrant pupils arriving directly from abroad are placed in a special language class where they receive individual tuition by both a Swedish and a home language teacher. Here they are prepared for the normal classes in which they are integrated gradually.

c. Upper secondary education (gymnasieskolan)

Upper secondary education lasts two to four years. Foreign students are offered here two hours of home language a week. This year 27 students were studying six different home language courses.

Since 1978, those pupils that arrive in Skövde when they already qualify for upper secondary education but with insufficient knowledge of Swedish language and culture, can follow an introductory course. The aim of this course is to provide the student with sufficient knowledge of Swedish, information about Swedish society, general knowledge, mathematics, English and study and occupational guidance, so that he can make the correct choice in upper secondary education. For the moment eight students are following this course.

d. Some further data on organisation, curricula and methodology in immigrant education in Skövde

The current project is not of an experimental nor provisional nature, the general scheme is to continue. Further adaptation of the project on the general but especially on the local level can occur in function of new insights and changes in the population structure. The above-mentioned scheme

was introduced in the 1970s. Of course the different activities did not all start at once but were introduced progressively. For example, when basic educational instruction in the home language for Finnish pupils was introduced in 1972 for the lågstadiet, many Swedes thought that this ought to be sufficient and that further education had to continue in Swedish. Teaching staff and parents meanwhile quickly realised that three years of this sort of instruction was not enough to acquire a good knowledge of Finnish nor a sufficient knowledge of Swedish to continue further instruction in this language. Therefore the same system was continued in the mellanstadiet in 1976. For similar reasons student guidance was introduced in the högstadiet in 1979. For the Syrian/Assyrian pupils a trial in Turkish as a home language was introduced in 1976 because a lot of these pupils had Turkish nationality. This was not at all accepted by the parents (see above). Therefore only student guidance in Arabic was provided for but all forms of home language instruction were cancelled.

In all these matters the consultative group for immigrant education was very active and prepared the decisions for the school board after studying how similar problems were tackled in other Swedish towns, for instance Södertälje, and after visiting schools in Finland. For the moment the activities of this group have decreased, as no major decisions have to be taken because immigration is rather stable now and the scheme has reached its full development.

As far as concerns the curricula the Swedish curriculum has to be followed for the general subjects. For the home languages the curricula of the home countries are adapted and elaborated sometimes in collaboration with the embassies and cultural centres of the home countries. Teachers however remain free to use and to try out methodologies. For instance, a Yugoslav teacher was using the Montessori method with great success in her home language classes. Special help in matters of methodology and curricula can further be obtained from consultants at the national school board in Stockholm. For the teaching of Swedish as a foreign language, there exist several systems developed in Sweden, for example the series "Svenska för alla" (5).

In drawing up and elaborating the curricula collaboration between the home language teacher and the Swedish teacher as well as between the teacher who is responsible for the student guidance and the teachers of other subjects is important. All work is done to attune the different aspects to each other.

In classes where student guidance is given there are two teachers in the classroom at the same time. So sometimes special accommodation has to be provided so that the class can be split up to let each teacher take care of one part of the class.

Meetings with other teachers for the development of materials and curricula and about matters of internal organisation, meetings with parents and in some cases home visits are also part of the teachers' activities.

As far as concerns the qualifications of the teachers who work as home language teachers, or who are active in student guidance, most of them have normal teacher certificates with the additional requirement that they should be bilingual (Swedish and the home language). The regulations are however flexible enough to allow for the engagement of not-officially certificated, but nontheless valuable home language teachers if necessary. On the other hand some teachers followed special bilingual programmes at teacher training colleges. A Finnish-Swedish programme in this sense exists in Göteborg.

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e. Immigrant education outside the ordinary school system in Skövde

Immigrant education is also organised outside the ordinary school system.

First of all the local authorities have organised basic adult education for the illiterate adult immigrants (grundvuxskolan). Here they learn reading, writing and arithmetic in small groups of about five persons each at a rate of about twelve hours a week. This form of education is also subsidised by the government. Moreover, the students receive a special grant to follow the programme. In Skövde a special method was elaborated whereby the Latin alphabet was first used to learn to read and write one's own language (often a non-written dialect or a language with another script) and later on to learn Swedish. The basic philosophy behind this sub-project is that reading and writing are essential necessities to enable one to participate in Swedish society. Women are a special target group because they usually had less opportunities to become literate. In the recruitment of students home visits take an important place. For more details about methodology, see Akkad & Larsson (6).

Unemployment being high among immigrants, Swedish language instruction is organised within the framework of labour market training for immigrants. Here again the participants are motivated by special educational allowances.

Swedish language instruction for immigrants is also organised within the place of work. Immigrants in Sweden have the right to 240 hours of Swedish lessons during their work without losing their pay. The extra costs have to be borne by the employer. At the Volvo works in Skövde these lessons were organised in collaboration with the trade union. Special arrangements were further provided for by letting the "students" choose to have their lessons within the normal working hours or before or after their shifts.

Finally other institutions are partially involved in the education of migrants. For instance the public library in Skövde organises special activities like inviting a Finnish author, and it has a substantial number of books in foreign languages in stock. Most of these books are not carried by the library but borrowed from central libraries. Teachers are consulted about which books to order.

4. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

A first impression is that it is difficult to conceive of a system where much more can be done for the education of immigrants. This concerns not only the organisational elaboration of the scheme, but, as far as could be experienced, also the enthusiasm and the dedication of the teaching staff and management. It seems that Skövde in particular takes full advantage of all the opportunities that the government provides for in so far as the education of immigrants is concerned, but also makes a very good job of elaborating the scheme and adapting it in function of concrete situations After all in this scheme many immigrants have the opportunity, but not the obligation, to enjoy all or a great deal of their basic education in their own language, they have access to their culture through their own language and a lot is done to teach them the Swedish language as a means of becoming

integrated in Swedish society and as a means of access to higher education in Sweden. Student guidance is provided for if any difficulties remain. Parents, pupils and representatives of organisations of immigrants take part in the elaboration of the activities. In this sense the general objectives of equality, freedom of choice and co-operation are no idle words in Skövde.

As one of the Finnish parents said:

"We Finnish migrants belong to the workers-class and we did not trust the Swedish school system in the beginning. We thought it was not as profound as the system in Finland because it was not so disciplined as we were used to. But now we have seen that our children can learn in our own language, that they are learning quite a lot of things and that they are pursuing further education. In Skövde indeed a lot is done for immigrants."

Several home language teachers expressed the opinion that in Skövde in their work as teachers means were available that were not so in their homeland. Teachers, school nurses and school psychologists said that it was difficult to evaluate the effects of these initiatives for immigrant children in Skövde but a general impression was that since the introduction of the scheme facts like mutism, timidity, absenteeism, constant late arrival at school and aggressive behaviour had remarkably decreased.

Some aspects of the scheme have been studied more systematically by G Tingbjörn of the university of Göteborg and K Lasonen of the university of Jyväskylä, Finland. Complete results are not yet available because of the rather short duration of the scheme. Some interim conclusions concerning Finnish children however are (7):

1. Finnish pre-school children in Skövde largely lacked the readiness for reading and writing except children who attended a Finnish home language nursery school

2. In comparison to children in Finland the retardation in Finnish of pupils attending the Finnish home language lägstadiet was 2-2 1/2 years and of Finnish children in the ordinary Swedish lägstadiet 3-3 1/2 years. The retardation began to decrease however in the Finnish home language classes after the second year whereas in the Swedish classes an opposite trend took place.

3. The school achievement of Finns was better in the home language class than in the ordinary Swedish class. In general immigrant children have less good school achievement results than children going to school in Finland.

This school year the first group of Finns who followed the complete scheme will be leaving school. It is therefore too early to evaluate the achievements in higher education of these students in comparison to students who did not or could not take advantage of the current opportunities.

Further scientific evaluations of the sub-projects and methodologies remain however necessary because in function of these the project can be further directed to obtain maximum results. On the other hand there is more to the project than mere school results, for example satisfaction and integration are also very important but cannot be always so easily evaluated objectively.

A few questions about some sub-projects remain. First of all one could ask oneself if enough attention is always given to the cultural particularities of some groups when introducing new schemes and whether in these cases one does not rely too much on the importance of a few persons who do not represent all of the population. The difficulties encountered with the Syrian/Assyrian population, namely their refusal of Turkish as a home language and later their refusal of reading and writing tuition in any home language, could perhaps have been overcome or things would have run more smoothly if an anthropological survey had preceded the introduction of this part of the scheme.

Another question concerns the possible isolation of immigrants through the existence of intensive separate teaching. Indeed many Finns will stay in Finnish classes for several years without mixing much with Swedes. Does this not impede an integration into Swedish society? Judging from their experience some teachers said that this was not a real problem. In the seventh year of compulsory school all the Finnish children change to composite classes. At the beginning of the school year two "camps" arise in the class but after a few weeks a spontaneous integration occurs. Other teachers however recognised the danger of non-integration caused by this isolation and are afraid of an indifference towards each other of the different migrant groups and the autochthonous population.

Another possible consequence of accentuating home language classes so much is the neglect of good Swedish. The impact of the Swedish teacher is very important here.

A final question concerns the principle of the payment of the salary by the employer to his immigrant workers during their Swedish lessons. Although the principle is good to let the employer bear the extra costs, could it not cause them to refuse to engage immigrants, immigrants who are already suffering more from unemployment than the population at large.

5. TRANSFERABILITY

The transferability of the whole project of Skövde depends on at least three important conditions. First of all there are the financial conditions. It is clear that the organisation of immigrant education like that in Skövde is only possible if important financial support is available.

Financial resources however are not everything, what is also necessary is the political will to make far-reaching changes in the educational system in favour of immigrants and to invest money and energy in their education instead of having other priorities. This is only possible in a climate where immigrants are considered as human beings who form an

integral part of society and where it is recognised that it is in the interest of all groups who make up this society to let immigrants become fully integrated as equals and not merely as guestworkers, at the same time developing their possibilities and capacities and retaining their cultural particularities. The third condition is the relative autonomy of the local administration and the school administration in Sweden. In function of the different population groups, material conditions and insights Skövde was able to build up a scheme that was really adapted to the concrete situation and was not impeded by all sorts of binding principles and conditions that were strange to the situation. These seem the important conditions that are specific to Skövde and to Sweden in general. The same kind of project could be introduced anywhere in Sweden where there are immigrants and we suppose that similar projects are to be found all over Sweden. In other countries relative autonomy will be possible for the organisers of projects for immigrant education, but not the same financial support will be available nor will the same attitudes exist. More often financial help will lack completely.

Another condition that is necessary to develop a scheme like that in Skövde is of a non-principal but of a demographic nature: in order to use the financial support in a constructive way it is necessary to have enough children of the same age and culture and that they can be grouped in classes and schools. This follows from the way in which the financial support is calculated: 20 children from the same language group make it possible to arrange for 22 hours of home language tuition for this group of children; 20 children of 20 different language groups will only enable 1.1 hour of individual tuition for each child. So the scheme works only at its best if large migrant groups are present.

All this concerns the scheme of Skövde as a whole. On the other hand the different activities separately can be very inspiring for smaller projects. If the scheme as a whole could not be transferred to another town in another country perhaps some features of its basic adult education could be, or the special introductory course or a similar system of home language tuition in a compulsory school. Someone who is considering the introduction of home language courses somewhere else will understand that two or three years are not really long enough, after learning how the system of home language instruction for Finns in Skövde was expanded. He will also understand that home language is not necessarily the official language that is associated with a nationality as among the Syrians/Assyrians from Turkey. Many further examples could be given to show that the transferability of many sub-projects is possible after studying and comparing the specific situations and that everybody who is planning a sub-project like one of these that exists in Skövde ought to study what is happening in this town.

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